

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 /072 W

-----000573 291053Z /10

P R 290836Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5436

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6393

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM PINT KS

SUBJ: PRISONER RELEASE: WILL THERE BE MORE?

REF: SEOUL 6149

1. OPPOSITION AND HUMAN RIGHTS CIRCLES REMAIN OPTIMISTIC THAT MORE EM-9 PRISONERS WILL BE RELEASED, AND, INDEED, THERE ARE CONTINUING SIGNS OF ROKG EFFORTS TO GET PRISONERS TO SIGN STATEMENTS WHICH WOULE ENABLE ROKG TO RELEASE THEM WITHOUT LOSS OF FACE. NDP LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WAS CONIFENT THAT MOST PRISONERS WOULD BE RELEASED IN GRUPS FROM NOW ON EXTENDING POSSIBLY THROUGH THE YEAR. YI ALSO EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE IN MODIFYING OR ELIMINATING EMERGENCY MEASURES. HE THOUGHT HE HAD STRONG SUPPORT FROM RESPONSIBLE CHURCH LEADERS, FROM THE PUBLIC AND FROM HIS PARTY FOR HIS STEP AT A TIME STRATEGY FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY.

2. GETTING PRISONERS TO SIGN STATEMENTS APPARENTLY REMAINS A STICKING POINT, BUT EVEN HERE SOME PROGRESS IS EVIDENT. REV. KIM KWAN-SUK, KNCC SECGEN, TOLD EMBOFF THAT SENIOR KCIA AGENT SOUGHT HIM OUT TO EXPLAIN THAT IT WAS NOT ROKG POLICY THAT PRISONERS DEMONSTRATE REPENTANCE AND THAT

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PROSECUTOR'S ASSERTION TO THIS EFFECT ON JULY 17 WAS UNFORTUNATE MISSTATEMENT. KCIA OFFICIAL REPOTEDLY ADVISED THAT ROKG MERELY WANTED A SIGNED STATEMENT TO FULFILL ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS.

3. REF. KIM SAID KNCC RESPONDED BY SETTING UP A COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS OF FAMILIES OF EM-9 PRISONERS TO DRAFT A

STANDARD MEMORANDUM FOR SIGNATURE OF ALL PRISONERS.  
KNCC HOPES THIS TACTIC WILL PRODUCE A DOCUMENT WHICH  
WILL NOT COMPROMISE CONVICTIONS OF IMPRISONED AND WHICH  
WILL NOT LEAD ITSELF TO POSSIBLE ABUSE BY ROKG BEFORE  
DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL OPINION. FURTHERMORE, KNCC FEELS  
THAT INVOLVING FAMILIES IN DRAFTING MEMORANDUM WILL MAKE  
EVEN MORE RELUCTANT PRISONERS AMENABLE TO SIGNING SINCE  
THEIR ACTION COULD BE SEEN AS RESPONSE TO FIMILY PRESSURE  
RATHER THAN TO RIKG ULTIMATUM.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, REV. KIM REPORTS THAT DRAFTING  
SESSIONS HAVE BEEN STORMY WITH SOME MEMBERS ATTEMPTING  
TO INCLUDE LANGUAGE WHICH WOULD MAKE MEMORANDUM AN  
INDICTMENT OF ROKG POLICY. REV. KIM SAYS THAT HE HAS  
BEEN CALLED UPON TO MEDIATE DISPUTE AFTER DISPUTE AND HAS  
FOUND SESSIONS SO ENERVATING THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO  
DEPART AT ONCE FOR A WEEK AT THE BEACH TO RECUPERATE.  
HE IS CONFIDENT THAT COMMITTEE WILL COME UP WITH  
REALISTIC DOCUMENT BECAUSE MEMBERS FEELS THAT FREEDOM OF  
THEIR LOVED O KS DEPENDS IN GOOD MEASURE ON THEIR PRUDENT  
EFFORT.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRISONERS RELEASE, POLITICAL PRISONERS  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** SHUM, PINT, KS  
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**Review Markings:**  
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